

## **CONSERVATORS OF THE RIVER CAM**

### **CODE OF PRACTICE FOR COMMERCIAL PUNT OPERATORS**

(being those in ownership categories 4, 5 and 6)<sup>1</sup>  
(amended 2011)

#### **Preamble**

At their meeting on Thursday 13 January 2011, Conservators amended the Code of Practice, introduced in 2004/05 (revised subsequently in 2006). The Code sets out the Conservators' requirements and expectations for the safe operating of commercial punts on the navigation. The Code is issued under the general powers of the Control Officer, byelaw 3. Operators are required to accept the Code of Practice as a condition for the registration of their vessels. Subsequent failure to comply with the Code could be grounds on which the Conservators would refuse to register vessels in the future.

#### **General**

1. Operators are responsible for ensuring that their vessels are in a fit state for safe use and maintained in this state while being used for hire.
2. The operator shall take out and maintain Public Liability Insurance at a level indicated by Conservators and not less than £3,000,000 as a requirement of registration. The policy (and current premium receipt) for such Insurance shall be produced on request to an authorised officer of the Conservators. Copies of this documentation shall be provided on initial application and subsequent renewal of annual registration.
3. Operators must observe any reasonable precautions to safeguard their passengers and staff in times of high flow or other potentially dangerous conditions of navigation.
4. The operator must have a suitable and sufficient system in place to ensure that proper records are kept which show how many punts have been hired at any time and procedures to be implemented in the event that a punt fails to return to its station.
5. An operator shall not anchor, moor, berth or stop in such a position as to impede the clear and free passage of any other vessel on the navigation or the loading or unloading of passengers at any public landing place.
6. A punt operating in the hours of darkness must carry a white lantern or electric torch to be exhibited in sufficient time to prevent collision.
7. Lifejackets or buoyant apparatus shall be made available to assist vulnerable passengers.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for definitions

8. The maximum number of persons to be carried shall not exceed the number permitted. All punts must display clearly legible signs regarding the maximum number of passengers and their disposition (see Appendix).

9. Operators will maintain a record of accidents, including, where possible, information on the date, time, location and the circumstances, and the contact details of those involved. These records are to be open for inspection by the Conservators and, if necessary, by the Police and insurers.

10. Any accident which results in a formal complaint, personal injury or damage to vessels is to be reported as soon as possible to the Conservators' Control Officer and within 72 hours of that accident having taken place. A damaged punt may not be put back into use until adequate repairs have been carried out.

11. Authorised officers of the Conservators will investigate reported accidents (whether by operators or others) and the outcome of each investigation will be reported to the Conservators, who will take whatever action they deem to be necessary that is within their powers, including refusal to register the vessels of the operator or operators involved in succeeding years.

12. The lashing together of punts is prohibited except when empty punts are being moved to other parts of the river. Punts may only be moved in this way at off-peak times of the day.

13. There shall be no playing of amplified music, voice or amplified musical instruments which might give reasonable cause for annoyance to any person.

### **Chauffeur Punts**

14. The minimum age of a chauffeur shall be 16 years. The operator will provide a list of all chauffeurs to the Conservators upon request.

15. Chauffeurs are the masters of their vessels and therefore they are responsible for the safety of their passengers. Chauffeurs are responsible for ensuring that their punts carry no more than the permitted maximum number of passengers and that they are correctly seated. At the start of each trip, the skipper must give a safety briefing to all passengers.

16. As the professional masters on the river, chauffeurs are expected to set a high standard of consideration for other vessels and the masters of other vessels. Chauffeurs must put safety considerations before speed. They must set a proper example of navigating on the right and through the right hand arch of all bridges as the normal rule of the river. When crossing from one side of the river to the other, or when entering the river from any side channel or cut, the chauffeur shall do so at a proper time having regard to vessels navigating up and down the river and they shall give way to such vessels.

17. The operator must give reasonable training to all chauffeurs in a fully laden punt of the size they are to operate. The chauffeur must be able to demonstrate that he/she is competent, with particular attention given to the ability to stop in an emergency.

18. A training record is to be maintained for all trainees. These records are to be open for inspection by the Conservators or their authorised officers.

19. The operator shall have in place a drug and alcohol policy. This should include a statement to the effect that no chauffeur is to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while in charge of the punt, or when preparing to take charge of the punt.

20. When an accident occurs and people are at risk (for example, of drowning) chauffeurs who have been involved or are in the vicinity have a duty to assist to the best of their ability, consistent with the safety of their own passengers.

### **Self-hire Punts**

21. No vessel with a capacity in excess of six persons in total is to be hired out on a self-punt basis.

22. No self-hire punt shall be hired to a person or persons under the age of 14 years.

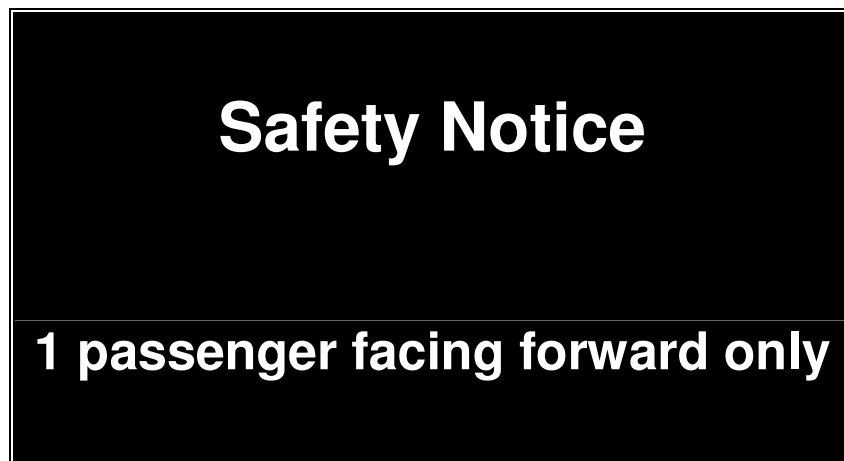
23. Operators must offer all hirers reasonable information on the basic requirements of safe punting and make self-hirers aware of the navigational rules (particularly, navigating on the right and through the right hand arch of all bridges) and of their obligation to abide by such rules as far as possible, consistent with their punting ability and to advise that if there is an accident the master/hirer is responsible for reporting it to the operator.

## APPENDIX

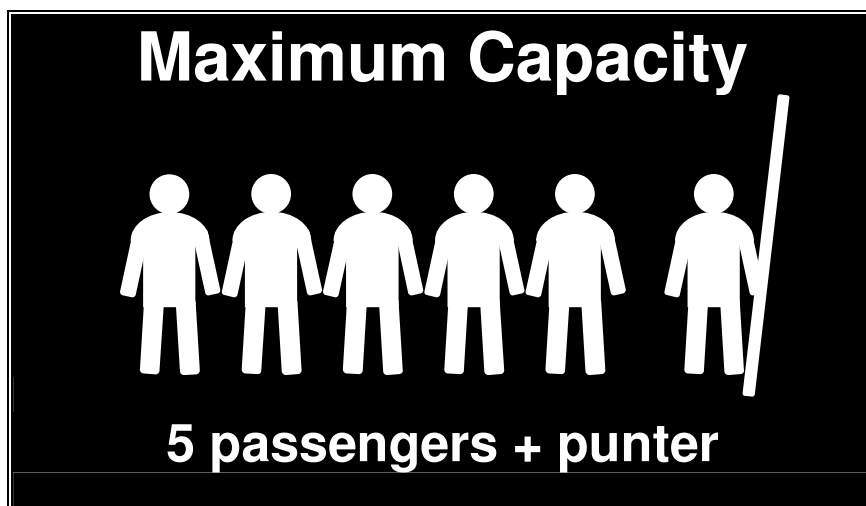
### Punt Signage

A1. Every 'single' punt (up to 1 metre in beam) shall display one of each of the following signs:

A1.1

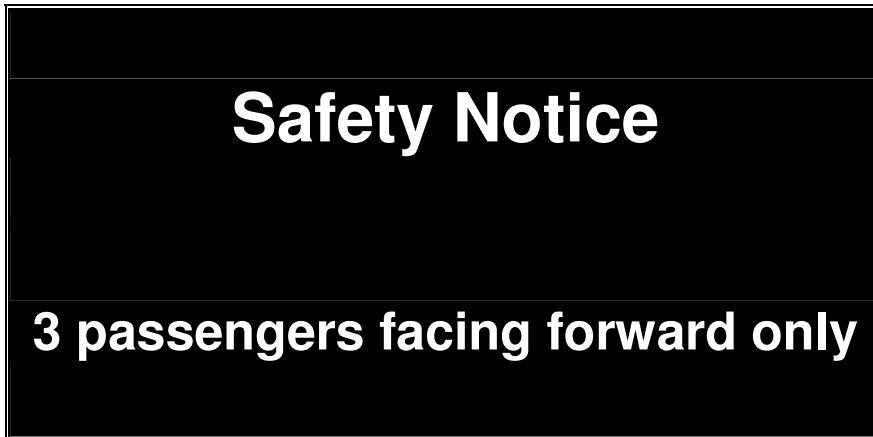


A1.2



A2. Every 'ferry' (double) punt (over 1 metre and under 1.95 metres in beam) shall display one of each of the following signs:

A2.1 Where there are forward facing seats:



A2.2



A3. Every punt shall display the following sign visible to those punting the vessel:



All signs shown to be a minimum of 200mm x 150mm with white lettering on a contrasting background, with white border printed in sans serif font, minimum font sizes 26 (headings) and 20 (remainder of text), to come into full force on 1 April 2012.

A4. Every punt shall display the alphanumeric identification mark registered with the Conservators on both sides of the punt so that it is legible at all times from both banks of the river.

#### **Ownership categories**

This Code applies to the following Owner categories:

- 4 University/College or other corporate owners of boats in Part 1 categories 01-12 inclusive for use solely by their members
- 5 University/College or other corporate owners who hire to the general public
- 6 Operators for hire to the general public of boats in Part 1 categories 01-12 inclusive